

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-20 remain in the application. Claim 1 has been amended. Claims 3, 6, 11-13, and 16 have been previously withdrawn and rejoinder of these claims has been requested. Claims 19-20 have been allowed.

In the third paragraph on page 2 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 1 and 4 have been rejected as being anticipated by Mandel (US Pat. No. 6,155,561) under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

In the third paragraph on page 3 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 1-2, 4, and 15 have been rejected as being anticipated by Charbonnet (US Pat. No. 4,547,115) under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

The rejections have been noted and claim 1 has been amended in an effort to even more clearly define the invention of the instant application.

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claim 1 calls for, inter alia:

at least one sheet-gripping device for displaceably aligning the sheet, said sheet-gripping device having a single tiltable positioning table and an actuating drive selectively displacing said positioning table in as many as three directions, said directions being a sheet travel direction, a direction transverse to said sheet travel direction, and a direction pivoting about an axis extending in a direction orthogonal to said sheet travel direction, the sheet to be aligned being fixable on said positioning table.

The Examiner has stated in the third paragraph from the bottom of page 4 of the Office action that Applicants' arguments regarding Mandel and Charbonnet are not persuasive because claim 1 of the instant application requires that the device be able to displace a sheet in only one of a set of directions whereas both references are capable of displacing a sheet in at least one of the set of directions. In consideration of the Examiner's arguments, claim 1 has now been amended to clearly recite that the positioning table can be selectively displaced in a plurality of directions selected from the group consisting of a sheet travel direction, a direction transverse to the sheet travel direction, and a rotation about an axis extending in a direction orthogonal to the sheet travel direction.

Clearly, neither Mandel nor Charbonnet shows "an actuating drive for selectively displacing said positioning table in a plurality of directions selected from the group consisting of

a sheet travel direction, a direction transverse to said sheet travel direction, and a rotation about an axis extending in a direction orthogonal to said sheet travel direction," as recited in claim 1 of the instant application.

Claim 1 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable as well.

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's statement in the first paragraph on page 4 of the above-mentioned Office action that claims 19-20 are allowed.

Applicants also acknowledge the Examiner's statement in the second paragraph on page 4 of the above-mentioned Office action that claims 5, 7-10, 14, and 17-18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Since claim 1 is believed to be patentable as discussed above and claims 5, 7-10, 14, and 17-18 are ultimately dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable in dependent form. A rewrite is therefore believed to be unnecessary at this time.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-2, 4-5, 7-10, 14-15, and 17-18 are solicited. Since claim 1 is generic, reconsideration and allowance of withdrawn claims 3, 6, 11-13, and 16 are requested upon allowance of claim 1.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out. In the alternative, the entry of the amendment is requested as it is believed to place the application in better condition for appeal, without requiring extension of the field of search.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Please charge any fees which might be due with respect to 37 CFR Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to

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Respectfully submitted,



For Applicant

YONGHONG CHEN
REG. NO. 56,150

YC

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Lerner and Greenberg, P.A.
Post Office Box 2480
Hollywood, FL 33022-2480
Tel: (954) 925-1100
Fax: (954) 925-1101